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General Assembly

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Agenda item 120
Strengthening of the United Nations system

Participation of the European Union in the work of the United Nations

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 2 of its resolution 65/276 of 3 May 2011, decided to adopt modalities for the participation of the representatives of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and its committees and working groups, in international meetings and conferences convened under the auspices of the Assembly and in United Nations conferences, as set out in the annex to the resolution. In paragraph 4 of the resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to inform it, at its sixty-fifth session, on the implementation of the modalities set out in the annex to the resolution.

2. The General Assembly recalled in resolution 65/276 that the European Union was a party to many instruments concluded under the auspices of the United Nations and was an observer or participant in the work of several specialized agencies and United Nations bodies. The Assembly noted that States members of the European Union had entrusted the external representation of the European Union, previously performed by the representatives of the member State holding the rotating Presidency of the Council of the European Union, to the following institutional representatives: the President of the European Council, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European Commission and the European Union delegations, which had assumed the role of acting on behalf of the European Union in the exercise of the competences conferred by its member States.

3. Based on the Secretary-General's understanding of resolution 65/276 and the annex thereto, the participation of representatives of the European Union, in its capacity as observer, shall be effected through the following modalities, in order to present positions of the European Union and its member States as agreed by them, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly and its committees and working groups. Resolution 65/276 does not apply to the other principal organs of the United Nations or to their subsidiary organs and is without prejudice to any privileges of

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participation which have been or may be conferred upon the European Union by them.

4. In accordance with the annex to General Assembly resolution 65/276, the modalities set out below shall apply to the participation of the European Union in all international meetings and conferences convened under the auspices of the Assembly and to all United Nations conferences, unless additional rights and privileges of participation are otherwise provided for the representatives of the European Union in the rules of procedure of the particular international meeting or conference convened under the auspices of the Assembly or under the rules of procedure of the particular United Nations conference.

The representatives of the European Union shall be:

(a) Allowed to be inscribed on the list of speakers among representatives of major groups, in order to make interventions

5. In order to make interventions, the representatives of the European Union will be allowed to be inscribed on the list of speakers to present positions of the European Union and its member States as agreed by them and shall be inscribed among the representatives of major groups in the order in which the European Union signifies its desire to speak.

(b) Invited to participate in the general debate of the General Assembly, in accordance with the order of precedence as established in the practice for participating observers and the level of participation

6. The representatives of the European Union will be invited to participate in the general debate of the General Assembly after Member States, the Holy See and Palestine in any particular meeting of the general debate. The representatives of the European Union will be invited to submit three preferences of date and meeting (morning or afternoon) from within the period of the general debate of a regular session of the Assembly. If the Assembly decides upon a different methodology of establishing the list of speakers for the general debate of a special session or an emergency special session, the representatives of the European Union will be invited to participate in that methodology, in accordance with the order of precedence as established in the practice for participating observers and the level of representation, which, for the European Union, in accordance with resolution 65/276, includes the President of the European Council, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European Commission and the European Union delegations, which have assumed the role of acting on behalf of the European Union in the exercise of the competences conferred by its member States.

(c) Permitted to have its communications relating to the sessions and work of the General Assembly and to the sessions and work of all international meetings and conferences convened under the auspices of the Assembly and of United Nations conferences circulated directly, and without intermediary, as documents of the Assembly, meeting or conference

7. The representatives of the European Union will be permitted to request the circulation of its communications relating to any agenda item in the sessions and work of the General Assembly, in the sessions and work of all international

meetings and conferences convened under the auspices of the Assembly, and in United Nations conferences, directly, and without a request by a Member State, and the relevant secretariat shall issue such communications as official documents of the Assembly, meeting or conference concerned.

(d) Permitted to present proposals and amendments orally as agreed by the States members of the European Union; such proposals and amendments shall be put to a vote only at the request of a Member State

8. The representatives of the European Union will be permitted to present proposals and amendments orally. The representatives of the European Union will not have the right to submit proposals or amendments for circulation as an official document. Action will be taken on the European Union's oral proposal or amendment only at the request of a Member State in accordance with the relevant rules of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly.[1]

(e) Allowed to exercise the right of reply regarding positions of the European Union as decided by the presiding officer; such right of reply shall be restricted to one intervention per item

9. The presiding officer will allow the representatives of the European Union to exercise the right of reply to any speech regarding positions of the European Union in the order in which it signifies its desire to make a reply and shall restrict the representatives of the European Union to one intervention per item.

The representatives of the European Union shall be ensured seating among the observers

10. The representatives of the European Union shall be ensured a seat among observers after Member States, non-Member States and Palestine in all formal meetings of the General Assembly, its Main Committees and the subsidiary organs of the General Assembly as well as in any of their informal meetings which are open to observers.

The representatives of the European Union shall not have the right to vote, to co-sponsor draft resolutions or decisions, or to put forward candidates

11. The representatives of the European Union will not have the right to vote, including in elections. The representatives of the European Union will not have the right to co-sponsor a draft resolution, decision or amendment. The representatives of the European Union may neither submit the European Union's own candidacy for any election or appointment nor submit the names of candidates for any election or appointment.

12. The representatives of the European Union will not have the right to raise points of order, to challenge or appeal the rulings of the presiding officer or to make procedural motions including the adjournment of debate, the closure of debate and the suspension or adjournment of the meeting.

[1] A/520/Rev.17.

A precursory explanation or recall of the present resolution shall be made only once by the President of the General Assembly at the start of each session

13. At the beginning of each session of the General Assembly, during its consideration of the report of the General Committee, the President will indicate that the participation of the representatives of the European Union in that session will be in accordance with Assembly resolution 65/276, after which there will be no precursory explanation prior to any intervention by the representatives of the European Union in the session.